

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, Maryland 20852

6408 '99 MAY 24 P2:02

Re: Docket # 98N-1038, "Irradiation in the Production,
Processing, and Handling of Food"

May 18, 1999

To whom it may concern:

I strongly feel that the FDA should retain the current labeling law, the current terminology of "treated with radiation" or "treated by irradiation," and the use of the radura symbol on all irradiated whole foods.

Regarding the issue of labeling, in its initial petition, the FDA concluded that irradiation was a "material fact" about the processing of a food, and thus should be disclosed. The material fact remains; therefore, labeling should remain. Consumer acceptability, storage qualities and nutrients are affected. Some irradiated foods have different texture and spoilage characteristics than untreated foods. Most fruits and vegetables have nutrient losses that are not obvious or expected by the consumer.

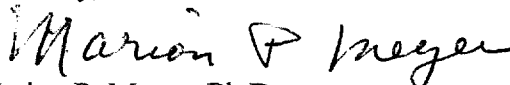
In addition, processing by irradiation causes chemical changes that are not evident and are potentially hazardous. Meat may have a higher level of carcinogenic benzene. All irradiated foods contain unique radiolytic products that have never been tested.

Whether or not the FDA has approved irradiation as safe, it remains a new technology with no long-term human feeding studies. Consumers certainly have a right to know if this process has been used on their food.

As to the kind of label used, I believe that label should be large enough to be readily visible to the consumer, on the front of the package. The label contains important information regarding the processing of the contents. For displayed whole foods such as produce, a prominent informational display similar to that used for meats should be used (but containing the term "irradiation" and the radura).

As a Zoologist, I believe that we need to assess the public health effects of widespread use of irradiated foods since it is a new technology. Therefore, I strongly believe that the **FDA's labeling requirement should not be permitted to expire.**

Sincerely,



Marion P. Meyer, Ph.D.
115 Ely Place
Madison, WI 53705

98N-1038

C2464